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NOTES FOR DCI BRIEFING OF
SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS
COMMITTEE ON 28 APRIL 1959

27 April 1959

IRAQ

- I. During the nine and a half months since the Iraqi revolution (14 July) was launched, the Communists have become the strongest single influence in Iraq.
 - A. They are rapidly moving toward a position where they will exercise outright control, be it from the facade of a "national front," ^{OR} as an outright "peoples democracy."
- II. Communists moved to this position of power from a place of negligible influence, with the party almost totally repressed and its key leaders jailed or deported by the former Nuri Said government. Swift Communist progress has resulted from effective coordination between the planned activities of disciplined hard-core of the Iraqi Communist party and the diplomatic, economic and military aid programs of the Sino-Soviet bloc states.
 - A. Communists have taken advantage of opportunities presented by local situation, particularly by contest for power after the 14 July military coup between Premier Qasim and pro-Nasir elements originally led by Brigadier Arif.
 - B. When Qasim felt that he needed more than his own popular standing to win out in his struggle against UAR-supported Arab nationalists in Iraq, Iraqi Communist party was ready with support with its own mushrooming organization.
 1. ^{also} Sino-Soviet bloc was ready with support in the form of diplomatic overtures, a whole series of cultural, scientific and technical agreements, scholarship programs

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2. Also, USSR made a \$168,000,000 arms deal (nine shiploads delivered to date).
 3. It subsequently supplied a \$137,500,000 credit for economic development supervised by Soviet specialists.
- C. Communist party leaders have used growing power and special influence with Qasim gradually to eliminate anti-Communists from key government and army posts. Whether these anti-Communists were pro-Nasirites, plain Iraqi nationalists, or socialists, has not mattered. This process continuing.
- III. The UAR-supported abortive Mosul revolt in early March paved the way for an even more vigorous and open growth of Communist influence.
- A. As a result Qasim's government has undertaken a sweeping campaign of purging and/or arresting leading anti-Communists in the army and bureaucracy.
 - B. All significant information media inside Iraq are now in Communist hands.
 - C. The size of the Communist-dominated Popular Resistance Force has been increased; nominally under army control, it is apparently getting some arms; its members act as a type of storm troops and there may be as many as 50,000.
 - D. Some friction between the Popular Resistance Forces and the army continues, but with so many senior officers already under arrest, present army leaders appear cowed.

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E. Chief of the air force, and army deputy chief of staff for operations, and deputy chief of staff for planning, are Communists.

F. a pervading general atmosphere of fear, typical of a descending "iron curtain." All Westerners are subject to new "security restrictions" and Iraqis are afraid to talk with Americans privately or for any length of time, lest they be charged with plotting.

G. Communist-organized mass demonstrations are staged almost weekly to keep remaining anti-Communist elements aware of the Communist "power of the street."

H. More and more Western business interests are being squeezed out, and pro-Communist Economics Minister Kubba is proceeding with his efforts to establish a Soviet-model planning apparatus.

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- V. Nasir is continuing his propaganda barrage against Communism in general and Iraqi Communism in particular. He is also using Shammar tribesmen in northeast Syria for harassing attacks on Iraqi border posts, but he no longer appears to have the assets to foment a successful uprising in Iraq. *Continuing Tribal Difficulties*
- VI. The Soviet Union, well pleased with the way things are going in Iraq, and anxious to continue a useful relationship with the UAR, is continuing its efforts to convince Nasir that his anti-Communist campaign aids only the West. 25X1

Khrushchev is said to have described Nasir as a "true nationalist" and "the only leader of the Arab world."

2. He reportedly apologized for saying on a 16 March speech that Nasir used the "language of the imperialists."

- B. In his speeches [redacted], Nasir has in fact 25X1 limited his anti-Communist statements to the danger of Communism in the Arab area.
- C. He is said to have stated on 27 April that he will stop the campaign against the Communists and Iraq because he is unsure that he can "win" in Iraq and because he feels he does not have adequate Western support.

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VII. Another element of instability in area and possible lever for USSR ^{are} ~~on~~ Kurdish minorities.

A. Some 800,000 Kurds in Iraq, ^{750,000} ~~500,000~~ in Iran, ^{1,500,000} ~~150,000,000~~ in Turkey, ^{200,000} ~~several hundred thousand~~ in Syria and about ^{60,000} ~~100,000~~ in USSR.

B. Some months ago the famous Kurdish rebel, Mulla Mustafa Barzani, returned to Baghdad. He had been in USSR since 1945 where he fled after his effort to create a Kurdish state in Iraq and Iran had failed.

C. Recently some 850 Kurds were repatriated to Iraq from USSR by ship via the Suez to Basra.

D. UAR propaganda claims these were to form a "foreign legion" but there is no real evidence to support this.

E. Kurds abetted by Soviet agents are, of course, a potential pressure group which could act in Soviet interest and could cause serious trouble especially in Iraq and Iran.

VIII. Meanwhile, in adjacent area Iran, government officials are concerned not only over local repercussions to Iraqi developments but over the possible effects of bitter Soviet propaganda attacks against Shah.

A. The attacks began after termination of unsuccessful Soviet-Iranian nonaggression treaty talks on 10 February.

B. Iran's conclusion of a defense treaty with US on 5 March is being used as additional propaganda material by Soviet Union.

C. The situation is made more dangerous because there are dissatisfied elements in Iran, which include some of the middle class and lower ranks of army.

D. Soviet propaganda attacks may give encouragement to such elements to plan overturn of regime.